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## Girls' Weekend Guide to Charleston, South Carolina



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Charleston, South Carolina is one of those cities that embodies everything about Southern hospitality. The quaint streets, the history, and above all, the kindness of its residents promise to make any trip there one to remember. Unlike many city vacations, a visit to Charleston is all about slowing things down. So rather than rushing from location to location, choose a few places of interest, and explore the city at your leisure. We promise you won't regret it.

Here's how we've broken it down for you:

#### WHERE TO STAY:

Budget Hotels (less than \$150/night)  
Mid-range Hotels (\$150-300 night)  
Treat Yo'self Hotels (\$300-500 night)

#### WHAT TO DO:

Entertainment  
Culture  
Relax and Indulge  
Shop  
Outdoor Fun

#### WHERE TO EAT:

Best Eats Under \$10  
Best Dinner and Brunch Spots  
Drinks with the Girls

## Where to Stay

### Budget Hotels (under \$150/night)

**King Charles Inn**

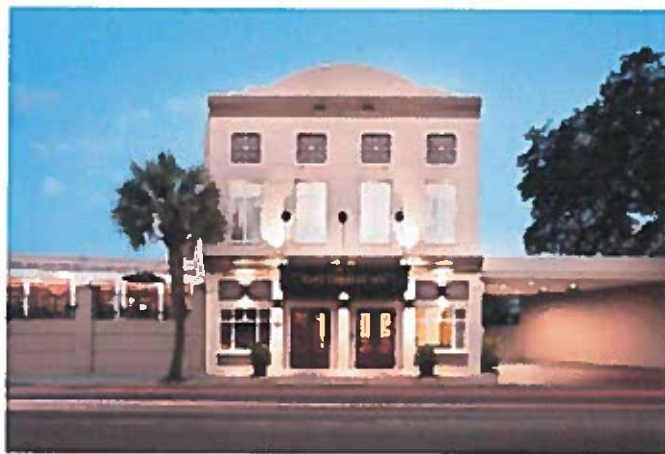


Image via

The King Charles Inn is located downtown and is surprisingly budget friendly despite its solid list of features and amenities. The inn has an outdoor pool and sundeck, which isn't always easy to come by in the downtown area, and is a saving grace during hot summer months. Their pub and cafe is newly renovated—a good place to stop before heading out into the city.

#### 1837 Bed and Breakfast

Built in the early 1800s (hence the name), 1837 is a classic historic Charleston property that consists of a main house accompanied by a carriage house. Though it's a bed and breakfast, you'll be happy to find all the essential amenities you'd expect from a big-name hotel along with perks like breakfast and afternoon tea. Because each suite is slightly different, you may even end up with an unexpected bonus like a claw foot tub!

#### Notso Hostel

One of the most affordable spots in Charleston, Notso Hostel is a clean, centrally located option that offers both private rooms and dorms. Though there aren't as many amenities as some downtown hotels, their staff provides

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While there's nothing as historic as your average hotel, your stay includes breakfast, parking, and Wi-Fi making this a really great value. But there are great common areas including a beautiful porch and kitchen (helpful if you want to save money by cooking a meal or two).

## Mid-range Hotels (\$150-300/night)

**Elliott House**



image via

Charleston is no stranger to cozy, boutique properties, and the Elliott House is one of the best. The hotel houses an elegant courtyard that acts as the perfect retreat after a long day traversing the city. A nightly wine and cheese reception and a hot tub are just the cherry on top.

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**The Mills House**

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photo by [ERDINE SCHODERL](#)

The Mills House is truly an icon in Charleston with its pink exterior and ideal location just around the corner from King Street. Rooms feature a heavy dose of southern charm and other property highlights include a beautiful outdoor pool and an on-site restaurant and lounge. This spot is especially ideal if you want to explore the city on foot as it's close to nearly all the major tourist attractions.

#### [Andrew Pickney Inn](#)

The Andrew Pickney Inn is a sunny hotel near Charleston's historic City Market. The rooftop terrace provides a lovely view of the city and it's the perfect spot to have breakfast each day. With just 41 rooms, the property is intimate without feeling too small. Though the rooms are all beautifully decorated—the lobby decor with its exposed brick will have you swooning.

### Splurge Hotels (\$300-\$500/night)

[Zero George](#)



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The Zero George embodies just about everything you'd want in a Charleston hotel. The rooms are luxuriously appointed with the world's comfiest beds imaginable and combined with the painstaking attention to detail throughout the hotel, well, you'll never want to leave. Bikes are available for use at any time, breakfast and wine and cheese receptions are included, and the porch provides the perfect spot for an evening cocktail.

#### [Belmond Charleston Place](#)





Image via

Southern charm meets luxury at Belmond Charleston Place. Though there are several great features, the property really shines when it comes to the rooms, particularly in the marble bathrooms complete with custom toiletries. Once you finally venture out of your room, treat yourself to the renowned spa facilities or the variety of on-site dining options.

The Spectator Hotel



photo by Emilia Schobert

Inspired by the Roaring Twenties, style and elegance seeps through every part of this hotel. Personalized butlers, a speakeasy-style bar, and some of the most stylish rooms in Charleston are all part of the package here. With its high-end finishes and commitment to customer service, this is the perfect spot for a special occasion (like a bachelorette weekend).

## What to Do Entertainment

Battery Park

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The Battery is one of the most quintessentially Charleston spots around, and it's a must on any trip. The homes in this area are among the most historic and iconic in the city and you've probably seen these brightly painted beauties on postcards or in guidebooks. After taking in the historic homes, walk along the water and experience one of the most relaxing, scenic parts of the city. Though it's close to the action downtown, it provides a serene experience that makes you feel as if you're much farther away.

#### Aiken-Rhett House

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photo by Emilia Schobert

The Aiken-Rhett House was the home of former South Carolina governor William Aiken, Jr. It retained family ownership for 142 years until being sold to the Charleston Museum and today it is preserved and open to visitors for tours. A great option for history lovers, this house gives you a glimpse into what it would have been like to live there in the 1800s.

#### Farmers Market at Marion Square Park





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On Saturdays from April through November, you can visit the Farmers Market at Marion Square Park for a taste of all things local in Charleston. In the past, it's been ranked one of the best farmers markets in the entire country, so needless to say, it's worth the visit. There are a great variety of farmers, food vendors, and local artisans to choose from. If you're visiting in December, you'll be able to experience a holiday market (instead of the regular market).

Palmetto Brewing Co.

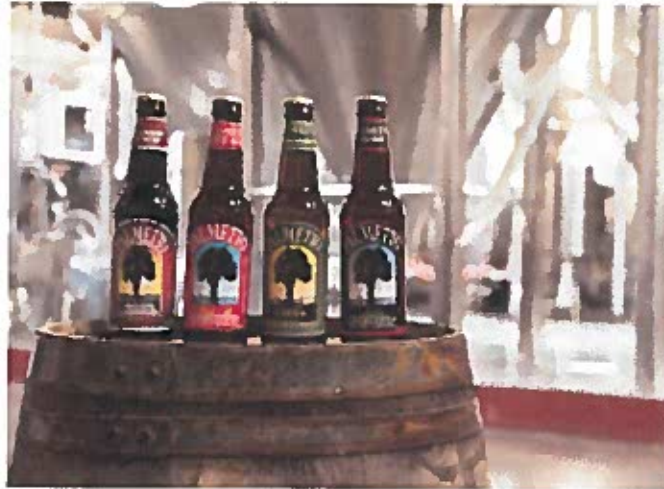


Image via

There are a few different local breweries in the area, but we love the fun vibe, live music and, of course the beer at Palmetto Brewing Co. You're can tour and taste the brews from Tuesday through Saturday every week. Be sure to check the events calendar before going as they often host concerts and live acts.

## Culture

Gibbes Museum of Art

Charleston has a vibrant visual arts scene and the Gibbes Museum of Art is a great spot to learn more about it. In addition to a well curated collection that consists of several artists with ties to the city of Charleston, the museum is heavily involved in the arts community and often hosts art talks and events for museum members and non-members alike. Be sure to take a look at the [calendar](#) page before going to see if your trip coincides with one of their special events. *\*note: the museum is currently under renovations so be sure to check on opening times before you go*

Unitarian Church Cemetery



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Image by [Reema Desai](#)

Tucked off of King Street in Charleston, you may end up stumbling upon this historic cemetery on accident. Completely overgrown with trees and plants, the cemetery is equal parts fascinating and historic (and a little bit creepy\*). The cemetery is referenced in Edgar Allen Poe's poem *Annabel Lee* adding to the spooky factor.

#### Magnolia Plantation and Gardens



Image via

Magnolia Plantation is a historic property just outside the downtown Charleston area. The gardens were selected as one of the most beautiful gardens in the U.S., while the plantation is the oldest public tourist site in the Lowcountry. There are a number of different tour options so visitors can partake in the historical significance of this site.

#### The Charleston Museum

As you've probably gathered thus far, Charleston is a city steeped in history. For those who'd like to learn more, we recommend the Charleston Museum, which provides an in-depth look at the history of Charleston and South Carolina Lowcountry. This region of the country has been home to many different people and cultures over the years, and the museum does a tremendous job of capturing this history.

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## Outdoor Adventure

### Folly Beach







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A short 15-20 minute drive lands you on South Carolina's beautiful shell laden coastline. Bring a towel, sunscreen, and sunglasses to set up shop on the beach and relax in the sand. As long as you don't mind walking a bit, you can easily find a secluded spot away from the crowds (a big plus in our book!). If you forgot to grab snacks before embarking, stop by the [Lost Dog Cafe](#) for a quick and delicious fix.

#### Boating

After a day at Folly Beach, consider making your way just up the road to rent a kayak for the afternoon at [Charleston Outdoor Adventures](#). You can choose to rent a boat per hour or go on a guided tour for a more in-depth experience. If paddling isn't your thing, you can charter a boat instead—a relaxing way to get out on the water and take in the views.

#### Bike Riding



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Image by [Danielle Moss](#)

Downtown Charleston is compact enough that you can get almost anywhere on a bicycle in less than 15 minutes. The narrow streets also make biking feel safe and welcome. Drivers are polite, and you definitely don't have to be a biking expert to get around. While there are many different places you can rent a bike, we recommend trying [AffordableBike](#) or [The Bicycle Shoppe](#) to hit the road as quickly as possible. Many hotels in the area also offer bikes for rent so you may want to explore that option first.

## Relax and Indulge

[Sweet 185](#)



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Sweet 185 is an inviting salon and boutique located right on the city's bustling King Street. Though they're famed for sugaring treatments, you can also stop in for spa standbys like facials and massages. If you don't have time for a full treatment, it's a great spot to stop to stock up on organic all-natural skincare products.

### [Earthling Day Spa](#)

Earthling is a locally owned spa right downtown and has been serving the area since the late 1980s. The spa takes a total body wellness approach and even offers Pilates classes on-site! They offer everything from manicures to microdermabrasion and offer special group packages if you're going with a larger party.

### [The Spa at Belmont Charleston Place](#)





Image via

If you prefer a lux spa experience, the spa at Belmond is the place for you! In addition to high-end treatment rooms, the spa also houses a pool, Jacuzzi, and fitness center making it easy for a spa treatment here to turn into a full day affair.

## Shop

The Commons

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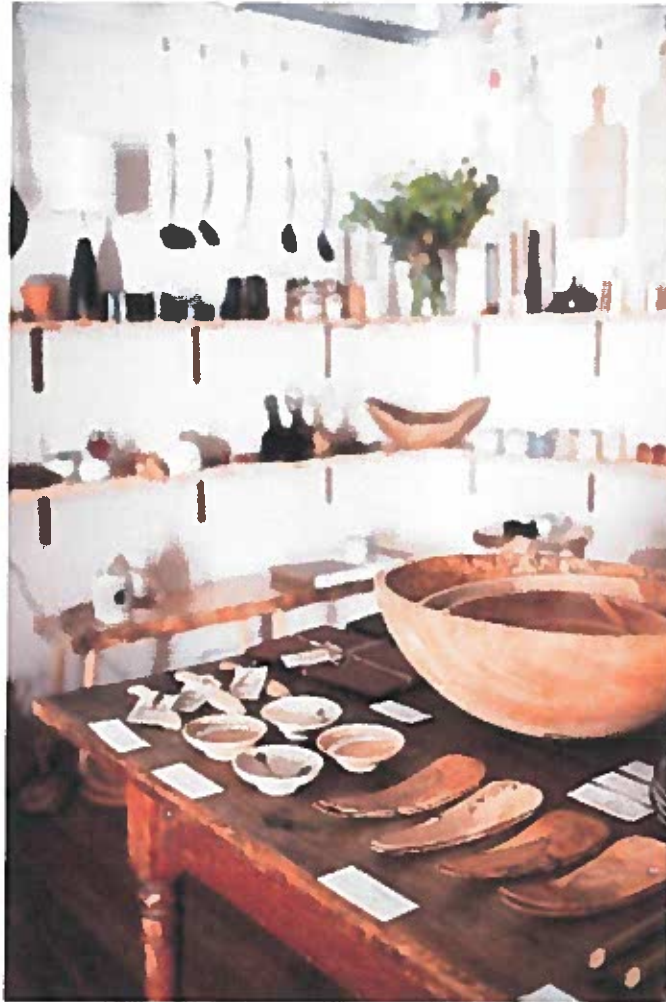


Image by Olivia Rae James

The Commons is a beautiful home goods store that will make you contemplate redecorating your entire home. The focus of the shop is on modern American housewares that are well designed and unique. The shop features vendors from all around the country, all of whom are doing some seriously creative, beautiful work.

Candy Shop Vintage

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photo by *Emilia Schabert*

Owned by designer Deirdre Zahl, this cute little shop is the perfect spot to pick up a souvenir bauble to take home with you. Housing a beautiful collection of vintage inspired jewelry, you'll be sure to find something unique to take home with you—for yourself or as a gift. We especially love the Celebrate collection, a fun line inspired by classic cocktails. Other highlights include their selection of [Charleston Rice Beads](#).

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#### Candlefish



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You'll want to transport Candlefish back to your hometown once you experience the beauty of this shop. As the name suggests, candles are the name of the game but the shop also curates other goods that you're guaranteed to love. In addition to an amazing selection of candles, you can also stop by the shop for a variety of candle making workshops.

Ro Sham Beaux



photo by Emilia Schobert

If you're anything like us, you're constantly on the search for the perfect unique item for your home. While it seems a bit strange to be on the hunt for light fixtures while on vacation, a visit to Ro Sham Beaux is a must for any interior design lover. Just know their pieces are not the most budget friendly, but browse through to gather inspiration for your own place.

## Where to Eat

### Best Eats Under \$10

Batcher and Bee



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Butcher and Bee is definitely not your average sandwich spot. With innovative options such as a pulled squash sandwich (butternut squash and smoked cabbage with BBQ sauce) and a creative take on a Jamaican sandwich with jerk chicken and bananas, you can get a high quality meal for under \$10 easily here. Offering indoor and outdoor seating, it's frequented by both tourists and locals alike. This spot is BYOB so you can pick up wine or beer at [The Dally](#) right around the corner.

#### Xiao Bao Biscuit



Image via

Xiao Bao Biscuit serves up comfort food with influences from several Asian countries including China, Korea, and Thailand. Be ready to gorge on rice topped with super flavorful proteins and pickled vegetables with a healthy dash of chili sauce. But beware, the spice may not be for the faint of heart!

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#### The Taco Spot

Imagine your most beloved Tex Mex restaurant melded with all of your Lowcountry favorites and you'll end up at The Taco Spot. Start with chips, salsa, and guacamole before selecting from their menu full of tacos, burritos, and quesadillas. Paradise for those who have a soft spot for Tex Mex and a good deal.

#### Bon Banh Mi







Image via

Delicious sandwiches bursting with flavor and overflowing with pickled veggies, cilantro, and protein? Check. Under \$10 so you can save money for a fancy dinner later in your trip? Check. Free delivery so you don't have to get out of your hotel bed if you don't want to? Check! This is a convenient, filling, and budget friendly option where you can't go wrong.

## Best Dinners and Brunches

Zero Cafe + Bar

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Image by Reema Desai

Until a few years ago, you couldn't dine at the Zero Cafe unless you were staying at its hotel but luckily, for you, that's changed. Its off the beaten path and you may even accidentally pass it while trying to find where it's located. But worth the search, chef Vinson Pettilo crafts beautiful food in a kitchen built inside a carriage house from 1804. You may even recognize him as a contestant on both Chopped Champions and Top Chef. The food is elegant, daring, and downright delicious. Grab an outdoor seat and a bottle of wine to ponder why you didn't get to this place sooner.

### FIG

FIG essentially defines what it is to eat local. They source ingredients solely from local producers and farmers and refuse to use out-of-season ingredients. Fresh seafood pasta with peas and greens in the spring will be missing from the menu as you reach the colder months when autumnal offerings appear. You will be hard pressed to find the same dish twice, and

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why would you want to when you have so much to choose from? Get reservations early as FIG tends to fill up weeks in advance (and for good reason).

### The Ordinary



photo by *Emilia Schabert*

It wouldn't be a trip to Charleston without a meal or two of quality seafood (unless you're vegetarian, that is). The Ordinary happens to be the sister restaurant of FIG, and it's no coincidence that two restaurants from the same chef show up on this list. Take advantage of oysters and clams caught by local fisherman while tipping back fantastic cocktails and wine. Make sure to check their daily specials for creative meals as well as classics like lobster rolls.

### Husk

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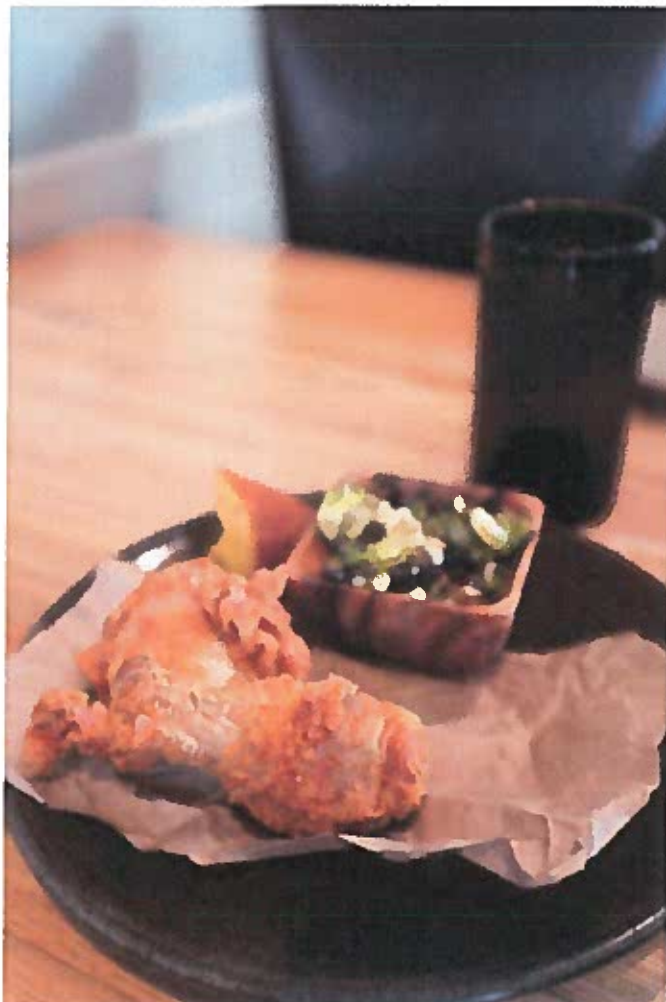


Image by *Danielle Moss*

Sean Brock is something of a legend in Charleston, running some of the most iconic restaurants in the city. Book reservations in advance to enjoy elevated yet simple Southern classics as well as a few surprises. The restaurant is housed in an old Southern home that will make you feel like you are at a dinner party rather than one of the best restaurants in Charleston. Don't hesitate to get the fried chicken—we promise you won't be disappointed.

#### Cannon Green

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A great spot for brunch or dinner, Cannon Green is an impeccably decorated establishment in the upper peninsula of Charleston and a favorite among locals. The Mediterranean menu contains familiar options such as a beet salad and tortellini, but take a chance and try the chicken liver pate or cioppino (a seafood stew) for something new. We promise you won't regret it.

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## Drinks With the Girls

### Mimosa







image via

Mnero focuses heavily on tequila and whether you're a fan or not, it's pretty much guaranteed that you'll find a drink you love here. Order one of Mnero's ultra-creative cocktails that feature ingredients such as habanero, cinnamon, and ancho chiles. While you're there, also grab one of the best tacos in Charleston.

#### The Bar at Husk



image by [Reema Desai](#)

Don't be upset if you were unable to snag a table at the notoriously hard to get into Husk. The two-story bar next-door offers a large selection of their best dishes and cocktails in a comfortable saloon style setting. We recommend grabbing a booth in the corner, and starting with a simple Old Fashioned before seeing where the night takes you.

#### The Belmont



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For cocktails, you can't go wrong with The Belmont. Sit at the beautiful wooden bar to take a step back in time or opt to sit at some of the marble high-top tables near the front for some quality people watching. It's also a good spot for a late night snack! Food is available until 1:00 a.m. and the bar is open until 2:00 a.m.

Bin 152

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What night out with the girls would be complete without a glass of wine? Bin 132 is a wine bar that takes their craft seriously and they execute it perfectly. Grab a glass or share a bottle and pair it with cheese and charcuterie with freshly baked bread. Bin 132 is proof that doing one thing well pays off. As if the wine wasn't enough, their friendly, knowledgeable staff will have you prying for a second visit.

#### The Gin Joint

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photo by Emilia Schobert

This 1920s style bar serves gin cocktails in a cozy, intimate setting. The bartenders are knowledgeable and the ingredients (especially the gin) are all high quality. In addition to fantastic drinks, the menu consists of bar favorites (think grilled cheese) as well as interesting experiments like Pad Thai popcorn. If you aren't a fan of gin, they also have plenty of other fantastic mixed drinks using other spirits.

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